DARK HORSE COMICS

#1

FROM THE WORLD OF GHOST

Sister Imperator

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Sister Imperator

#1 of 4

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Sister Imperator has been integral to the band Ghost and its lore since its founding. A representative of the Clergy, she and her past were shrouded in mystery—until now. Discover Sister Imperator's hidden history and the gruesome events that led her to become the woman both loved and feared by so many, from her innocent origins in small-town New England to the force behind Ghost.

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NO...!

BLESS OUR HOME

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD...

...HAVE MERCY!

RRMMMMBBBLLL

MERCY IS THE ONE THING I DIDN'T LEARN AT MY POP'S KNEE.

PLIP

SOME MIGHT EVEN SAY YOU MADE ME THE WOMAN I AM TODAY.

YOU...? I...KNOW YOU...?

PLEASE, I'M A MAN OF GOD!

CAN YOU HEAR THE THUNDER? I SUPPOSE NOT. YOU NEVER CARED TO LISTEN TO ANYTHING BUT YOURSELF.

I'M BEGGING YOU--

YOU KEPT THIS?

DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH THAT! YOU ALWAYS WERE A CREATURE OF SIN!

I'VE HEARD THAT BEFORE. YOUR NOSTALGIA, THOUGH. THAT'S UNEXPECTED.

NOT THAT I DON'T APPRECIATE IT.

I DO LOVE AN IRONIC END--

DROP THE WEAPON!

HANDS IN THE AIR!

YOU'RE BRINGING HER OUT NOW?

OKAY, WE'RE SETTING A PERIMETER. ONLY E.M.T.S ALLOWED THROUGH.

CAN WE GET A STATEMENT?

CAN YOU TELL US...

...WHY YOU DID IT?

IS HE REALLY DEAD? HAVE YOU KILLED BEFORE?

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?

IF THE PUNISHMENT FIT THE CRIME, WHAT DID HE DO TO EARN THIS?

YOU, I LIKE.

COME SEE ME IF YOU CAN.

SEVERAL HOURS LATER.

STILL WILLING TO TALK?

THAT DEPENDS.

ON WHAT?

I'M NOT SURE ABOUT THIS.

SHE DOESN'T LOOK SCARY NOW, BUT WHAT SHE DID TO THAT OLD GUY...!

I'M SURE SHE HAD HER REASONS.

I'LL BE FINE AS LONG AS I DON'T GIVE HER ONE. RIGHT...?

THERE IT IS.

WHAT?

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE. THAT WOULD BE THE ATTITUDE *YOU* DON'T HAVE.

IT'S YOUR FUNERAL, I GUESS.

I WON'T TAKE TOO MUCH OF YOUR TIME.

IT LOOKS LIKE I HAVE QUITE A BIT OF THAT TO SPARE AT THE MOMENT.

WHAT CAN I CALL YOU, MA'AM?

SISTER IMPERATOR WOULD BE RESPECTFUL...

...BUT LET'S TALK ABOUT A TIME WHEN JUST *SISTER* WAS MORE APPROPRIATE.

HARTFORD, CT, AUGUST 1953.

ONCE, THE AMERICAN DREAM WAS MORE THAN A PUNCHLINE...

...OR SO I THOUGHT WHEN I WAS MUCH MORE NAÏVE.

GIRLS! TIME TO COME IN!

YOUR FATHER WILL BE HOME SOON!

GO GET CLEANED UP.

WE'RE HAVING COMPANY AT DINNER.

OH, EARLIER THAN I EXPECTED!

CRRKK

I WANT EVERYONE TO WELCOME OUR NEW REVEREND!

I'M SORRY BUT I'M AFRAID I JUST COULDN'T WAIT...

...AFTER HEARING ABOUT YOUR BEAUTIFUL FAMILY AND YOUR RENOWNED COOKING ALL DAY!

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR ME TO LEARN THE TRUTH, THOUGH.

YOU'RE RIGHT, LAST NIGHT COULD HAVE GONE BETTER.

AND THE UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE YEAR AWARD GOES TO MY HUSBAND!

HE'S JUST SO PUSHY. YOU'D THINK WE'D BOTH WANT WHAT WAS BEST FOR THE CHURCH, BUT HE--

NO. HE WANTS WHAT YOU'VE ALREADY EARNED. HE'LL TAKE IT, TOO.

AND YOU'LL LET HIM, JUST SO EVERYONE WILL GET ALONG.

HE WANTS POWER. A BETTER LIFE. THERE'S *NOTHING* WRONG WITH THAT. BUT YOU HAVE TO FIGHT TO GET IT.

GOD WILL PROVIDE--

OH, LIKE HE'S DONE SO FAR? EVERYTHING WE HAVE WE'VE STRUGGLED FOR. WELL, *I* HAVE. YOU DON'T EVEN BOTHER...

WE'RE HUNGRY--

NOT YET! GO PLAY IN YOUR ROOM.

SOUNDS LIKE THE KIDS ARE UP...

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO. *BE MORE LIKE HIM.*

I DON'T CARE HOW, BUT YOU ARE *NOT* LETTING HIM STEAL YOUR PROMOTION.

WE WANT PANCAKES! WE WANT PANCAKES!

DON'T WORRY, SWEET PEA.

EVERYTHING ALWAYS WORKS OUT IN THE END JUST AS IT'S MEANT TO.

BUT--

TRUST GOD'S PLAN.

BUT WHAT IF GOD'S PLAN SUCKS?

DAD, WAIT! TAKE ME WITH YOU!

THERE WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING AT ST. SYLVESTER'S LAST NIGHT.

ONCE I GET IT CLEARED UP WE'LL DO SOMETHING FUN.

YOU STAY PUT. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

BUT I WANT TO--

DON'T BE STUBBORN! SAVE THAT FOR WHEN YOU NEED IT, OKAY?

BANG

I DID A LOT OF SNEAKING AND PEEKING THAT SUMMER, IT'S TRUE.

CONSEQUENTLY, I LEARNED MANY THINGS.

ALTHOUGH IT TOOK A WHILE LONGER TO ACT ON THEM.

BUT WHY--

SHHHH, WAIT HERE. I NEED TO TALK TO MOM.

OH, YOU POOR LOST LAMB--

I'M TRYING TO SPEAK TO MY MOTHER. *NOT* TO YOU.

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.

IF LOOKS COULD DRAW BLOOD...

HOW COULD YOUR FATHER HAVE KILLED HIMSELF?

HOW COULD HE HAVE DONE SUCH A COWARDLY, STUPID, *SELFISH*--

BUT HE *DIDN'T!*

REALLY! YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME!

I SAW--

HOW DARE YOU LIE ABOUT THIS AGAIN?

I'M TIRED OF HEARING YOUR CRAZY STORIES ABOUT OUR REVEREND!

HE OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T KILL ANYONE, MUCH LESS YOUR DAD. JUST *STOP.*

YOU'VE HEARD IT'S DARKEST BEFORE THE DAWN?

MY FATHER'S MURDER WAS ONLY SUNSET.

HARTFORD, CT, OCTOBER 1956.

IS THAT THAT MR. PRIESTLY?

HE DOESN'T LOOK VERY PRIESTLY TO ME!

C'MON, MOVE! I WANT TO SEE THIS!

HEY! I SAID--

WE DIDN'T TOUCH ANYTHING!

WHAT DID I SAY ABOUT WATCHING THIS UNGODLY FILTH?

BUT--

I'M YOUR FATHER NOW! MY WORD IS LAW IN THIS HOUSE!

YOU'RE NOT OUR FATHER! YOU'LL *NEVER* BE--

YOU *WILL* TREAT ME WITH RESPECT!

YOUR SINFUL HEART WILL LEARN *THAT* IF NOTHING ELSE!

BLESS OUR HOME

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?

WHAT DID I TELL YOU GIRLS ABOUT OBEYING YOUR FATHER?

HE'S *NOT* OUR FATHER!

WE DIDN'T *DO* ANYTHING!

HE IS THE HEAD OF THIS HOUSE. THAT MAKES HIM YOUR FATHER NOW.

DOES THAT MAKE ME THEIR MOTHER, THEN?

SINCE I DO MOST OF THEIR PARENTING NOW?

APOLOGIZE, WICKED IMP!

THE DEVIL IS IN YOU GIRLS. WE MUST SHOW A FIRMER HAND!

HOW *DARE* YOU? YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW HARD THINGS WERE, BEFORE...!

THE MAN DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO CONTROL ANYTHING, EVEN HIS FAMILY.

HOWEVER, I KNOW GOD GIVES, AND GOD TAKES AWAY...

...JUST AS I'M TAKING AWAY HALLOWEEN.

A WICKED HOLIDAY HAS NO PLACE IN A HOUSE FULL OF WICKED WOMEN. WE MUST BE EXEMPLARY IF WE WANT THE COMMUNITY TO TRUST US WITH THEIR SOULS. AND THEIR... RESOURCES.

NO HALLOWEEN? NO TRICK OR TREATING?

BUT WE ALREADY HAVE OUR COSTUMES!

SOMETIMES I WONDER IF IT WAS WORTH ALL THIS...

WAIT...!

HE CAN AND HE DID.

BUT HE CAN'T!

HOW COULD HE?

IT WON'T ALWAYS BE LIKE THIS.

FOR NOW, JUST STAY OUT OF HIS WAY, OKAY?

BUT...

YOU'LL COME WITH ME WHEN I LEAVE. I'LL LET YOU DRESS UP EVERY DAY.

YOU'RE LEAVING?

SHHH, NO TEARS. I WON'T FOR YEARS STILL. BUT WHEN I DO--

YOU CAN STOP SAYING I NEVER TAKE YOUR SIDE NOW...

...BECAUSE I GOT HIM TO AGREE TO LET YOU GO TRICK OR TREATING.

YAY! TRICK OR TREAT! TRICK OR TREAT!

I FEEL THERE'S A "BUT" IN HERE SOMEWHERE.

BUT IT'S THE LAST TIME. AND NO MORE OF THAT DEVIL MUSIC.

FOLLOW RULES, EXCEPT ONES ABOUT KILLING, OR COVETING WIVES. GOT IT.

THAT'S NOT FUNNY.

WHAT IF SOMEONE BELIEVED YOU? YOU COULD *RUIN* THIS FAMILY!

I'VE GOT AN EXTRA LOOT BAG, JUST IN CASE.

DON'T MAKE ME REGRET THIS.

EXTRA KEY'S UNDER THE MAT. IF WE GET SEPARATED, COME HOME.

BUT THAT WON'T HAPPEN, BECAUSE WHAT DO WE PROMISE TO DO OUT THERE?

WE *PROMISE* TO STICK TOGETHER...

...AND TO NEVER LEAVE OUR BIG SISTER.

WHERE DO YOU THINK *YOU'RE* GOING?

DRESSED LIKE *THAT?*

TRICK OR TREATING. IN COSTUMES, OF COURSE.

MOM SAID WE COULD!

THEN YOU TWO GO!

BUT *THIS* *ONE* HAS BEEN CORRUPTED.

SO SHE'S STAYING RIGHT HERE!

PLEASE! DON'T LEAVE US OUT HERE!

GO GET HELP!

POUND POUND POUND POUND

HELP FROM WHOM?

A LEADER OF THE CHURCH, A PILLAR OF THE COMMUNITY?

HAVEN'T YOU LEARNED BY NOW? THAT'S *ME.*

POUND POUND POUND POUND

AND NOW...

...WE'RE GOING TO DRIVE THE DEVIL OUT.

LEAVE HER ALONE!
GET AWAY FROM HER!
YOU REALLY THINK THIS IS A GOOD IDEA?
STOP, PLEASE!
YOU'LL JUST MAKE HIM MAD!
I SAID GET AWAY!
YOU REALLY NEED TO LEARN YOUR PLACE.
I CAN THINK OF ONE WAY TO TEACH YOU THAT.
NO, NO!
LET THEM GO! I'M THE ONE YOU'RE MAD AT, NOT THEM!
PLEASE... NOT THEM...

YOU'D THINK IT COULDN'T GET ANY DARKER.

BUT DAWN WAS STILL A LONG WAY OFF.

UM, HELLO? GIRLS?

WHOEVER LEFT THIS DOOR OPEN IS GOING TO BE SORRY!

OH MY GOD! WHAT HAPPENED?

AND WHERE ARE THE TWINS?

HE TOOK THEM! HE HIT THEM AND THEN HE TOOK THEM AWAY!

SLOW DOWN! WHO--?

THAT HORRIBLE CREATURE YOU CALL A HUSBAND!

WHAT...

YOU WICKED GIRL...

...WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

I ALREADY TOLD YOU...

IT WAS HIM. I WAS THERE. HE TOOK THEM SOMEWHERE!

AND YET YOU SAY YOU DIDN'T *ACTUALLY* SEE WHAT HAPPENED...

SHE'S BEEN TROUBLED LATELY, LYING ABOUT THINGS. YOU'VE SEEN IT.

THERE'S A CORRUPTION INSIDE HER..

BUT TO SAY SUCH HORRIBLE THINGS. I SUPPOSE SHE NEVER GOT PAST HER FATHER'S--

SHE MIGHT AS WELL BE POSSESSED. MAYBE SHE IS.

SHE NEVER DID LIKE ME.

I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST HER TO HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO THEM HERSELF...

... JUST SO I'D GET THE BLAME.

I HATE TO SAY IT BUT I'LL BE SHOCKED IF THEY ARE FOUND ALIVE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE HATES YOU THAT MUCH. AND SHE LOVES HER SISTERS--

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF EVIL.

THAT GIRL SHOULD BE LOCKED UP. NO GOOD WILL COME OF HER.

SOMETIMES YOU JUST WISH SOMEONE WOULD SHOW UP AND SAVE YOU...

BUT IN MY EXPERIENCE THAT'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO DO FOR YOURSELF.

CONNECTICUT
U S
202

IT TOOK ME A BIT TO GET USED TO LIFE ON THE ROAD.

NEW YORK
U S
11

GODDAMN, IS THERE ANYTHING BETTER THAN A FAST CAR?

MAINE
U S
2

THAT LIFE ISN'T ALWAYS COMFORTABLE...

...BUT ONLY COWARDS TRADE COMFORT FOR BEAUTY.

THIS IS WHEN MY NIGHT GOT THE DARKEST, THOUGH.

I'M NOT RUNNING A CHARITY. COME BACK WHEN YOU CAN AFFORD ME.

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO, THEN?

GUESS YOU SHOULD TAKE THAT UP WITH WHOEVER GOT YOU INTO THIS STATE.

I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO CONSULT THE ONLY RELIABLE PERSON I KNEW...

ME.

PEOPLE RESORTED TO ALL SORTS OF THINGS IN THOSE DAYS.

SOME DRANK BLEACH. SOME USED NEEDLES, OR HOOKS.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THIS. THERE ARE SAFE, RELIABLE MEDICATONS NOW.

EVERYONE DESERVES ACCESS TO THAT KIND OF HOPE. DESPERATION IS DANGEROUS.

PEOPLE ARE TOO IMPORTANT TO BE BROUGHT INTO THE WORLD THROUGH ACCIDENT, OR MALICE. PEOPLE SHOULD BE WANTED.

AND I WAS DETERMINED TO SEE MY DAWN.

SO, I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO.

GRAYHOUND

MY PHYSICAL HURTS HEALED QUICKLY.

BUT THE SCARS OF THAT BETRAYAL LINGER STILL.

GRAYHOUND

Grayhound

GRAYHOUND

MOVEMENT KEEPS THE TISSUE SUPPLE, AT LEAST.

QUEBEC

BESIDES, I FIGURED, WHAT THE HELL...

THERE'S A WHOLE WORLD OUT THERE...

MIGHT AS WELL SEE IT.

AROSA SUN

MAYBE EVEN MEET PEOPLE WHO AREN'T MURDEROUS ASSHOLES.

SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE.

YOU LOOK LOST.

I'M...ON AN UNSTRUCTURED JOURNEY.

WONDERFUL!

THEN YOU ARE FREE TO TRAVEL WITH ME!

AND JUST LIKE THAT, THE SUN ROSE.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

I'M TAKING YOU, AND THESE TRAVEL PAPERS, HOME WITH ME!

OKAY, WHERE'S HOME THEN?

BREMERHAVEN

THAT IS A MORE COMPLICATED QUESTION.

BUT RIGHT NOW? NOT FAR. JUST OUTSIDE OF THIS TOWN.

ANYTHING I SHOULD KNOW BEFORE WE GET THERE?

LET'S SEE... I HAVE FOUR BROTHERS.

AND I HOPE YOU LIKE ANIMALS.

THE NON-HUMAN VARIETY, THAT IS. MY BROTHERS CAN ALSO BE--

WAIT, *FOUR* BROTHERS?

THE MEN IN MY LIFE HAVEN'T EXACTLY DONE ME ANY GOOD.

THIS MIGHT BE A BAD IDEA.

NONSENSE!

PLEASE COME WITH ME, I NEED A SISTER! I'VE NEVER HAD ONE.

THIS IS WHERE YOU LIVE?

NO PLACE IN THE WORLD I'D RATHER CALL HOME.

WILD ANIMALS

CIRC

KNOCK-DOWN

TICKETS

COME ON, WE CAN PROBABLY STILL CATCH A LION TRAINING SESSION!

LION...?

OH! MARIKA, YOU'RE BACK!

EARLY FOR YOU TO BE IN COSTUME, NO? WE'VE GOT HOURS 'TIL SHOWTIME.

I'M GETTING MY NEW FRIEND HERE USED TO THE SEQUINS. HE'S SENSITIVE.

IS IT ALWAYS LIKE THIS HERE?

HARDLY.

EVERY DAY IS NEW. NEVER THE SAME!

BUT ENOUGH OF THIS. YOU NEED TO MEET THE REAL ANIMALS!

MY BROTHERS SHOULD BE HOME BY NOW!

COME ON!

I'M HOME!

AND I'VE BROUGHT US A NEW SISTER!

CIRCUS

I HOPE SHE DOESN'T CONSIDER HERSELF *TOO* MUCH A PART OF OUR FAMILY.

BUT... WHO...

HOW ARE *THEY* HERE?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN THEM AS A WARNING. BUT I FELT THEY WERE TELLING ME I'D FOUND A HOME AT--

THIS ALL HAPPENED SUCH A LONG TIME AGO!

WHAT ABOUT EXPLAINING WHY YOU ATTACKED THAT REVEREND TONIGHT?

THAT'S EXACTLY THE STORY I'M TELLING.

NOW SHUT UP AND LISTEN.

TO BE CONTINUED

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"